

A Committee was constituted immediately to investigate the causes of the accident; to list out the violations in the security and safety procedures which could have led to the accident and to fix responsibility for the lapses and also to suggest remedial measures to avoid such accidents. The Committee has since submitted its report. The Committee has concluded that the accident was not as a result of any sabotage but because of human error in wrongly loading a missile and pressing the push button (triggering) on the launcher in the process of explaining its working. The Investigation has also concluded that the presence of the launcher in the building used for assembling the missiles was a contributory factor.

Major penalty proceedings against four officers of BDL have been ordered. The explanation of the CMD, BDL, on the various lapses has also been called for.

Setting up of Thermal Power Projects

* 164. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Thermal Power Corporation has identified sites at Ratnagiri and Vidarbha region for setting up of two thermal power projects of 1000 MW each;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the views of the State Government and MSEB have been obtained by NTPC on said projects;

(d) if so, the reaction thereto; and

(e) by when the projects are likely to start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a), (b) and (e) The setting up of a power plant in a particular region/state by the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) is determined, with reference to availability of coal/fuel, demand and supply position in the region, availability of key inputs like land, water, project site meeting environmental standards and guidelines with minimum displacement of Project Affected Persons and acquisition of minimum prime agricultural/forest land, ability of the beneficiary States to pay and willingness to sign Power Purchase Agreement with adequate safeguards mechanisms and other techno-economic considerations. As a part of its long term capacity addition programme, NTPC is exploring some sites in Konkan and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra to assess their *prima-facie* suitability keeping in view the above aspects for setting up thermal power plant there.

[7th March, 2001]

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(c) and (d) NTPC will take steps to obtain necessary clearances and commitments in respect of availability of land, water, no objection from State Pollution Control Board, the State Government and other agencies after techno-economic feasibility of the proposed power plant is established and its location is finalised.

Expansion of rural roads

*166. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to expand the rural roads through the Prime Minister's Rural Road Programme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) and (b) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has been launched on 25th December, 2000 to provide road connectivity in the rural areas of the country. The Programme envisages connecting all Habitations with a population of over 1,000 persons, through good, all-weather roads, by the year 2003 and those with a population of more than 500 persons, by the year 2007. In addition to providing connectivity to about one lakh Habitations, the Programme also aims to upgrade, to specifications, about 5 lakh kilometres of existing Rural Roads.

The requisite Guidelines in this regard, for the year 2000-2001, have been communicated to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.

Losses in power sector

† * 167. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 40 per cent of the total electricity produced in the country is wasted in the form of transmission and distribution and out of the remaining 60 per cent, 20 per cent electricity is stolen;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the country suffers a loss of Rs. 37,000 crores every year in the power sector; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.